



24th January 2022

Dear Colleagues,

As you are aware there have been a lot of changes within education recently which have challenged school communities to think more creatively to ensure that we are best placed to keep our thriving village schools open for children in future years. Financial pressures are forcing schools to look at innovative and cost effective solutions. The pressure of Covid-19 has also brought home to us the benefits of being able to share our capacity. Our three schools, Parkham, Buckland Brewer and Woolsey, took the decision to form a management partnership in September 2021 to begin to explore the possibilities of working more closely together. Governors have monitored the success of this partnership and would now like to propose to make the arrangement a permanent one by moving into a formal federation whereby all three schools will share governance and leadership.

A federation is a family of schools, with each school retaining its unique character, its own budget and performance tables and having a separate Ofsted inspection. The current admissions processes will remain the same. The schools within the federation will share one governing board made up from representatives from all three school communities. Flying Start has been operating as a federation since January 2011 and reaping the benefits that come from small schools working more closely together and has a lot of valuable experience to share.

There is no single blue print for federation; each federation is tailored to the needs of the different schools and communities that are involved. There are currently approximately 29 federations across Devon involving over 83 schools, with the first federations in Devon forming in 2006 and many others considering this as a successful sustainable model for their school's future.

We are proposing to federate to ensure continuing strong leadership and high standards in teaching and learning whilst maintaining each school's individual ethos and values.

What will the benefits be for our schools?

- Sharing strong and proven leadership;
- Sharing teaching expertise;
- Availability of teaching resources;
- Increasing opportunities for the children to mix with a wider group both academically and socially;
- Greater access to a wider range of resources (human and physical), and opportunities to make some savings to reinvest in children's learning;
- Joint planning and curriculum development opportunities for staff;
- Joint training of staff to impact on children's learning;
- Provide the children with even wider opportunities to prepare them for a more secure transition process into secondary school.

How will this work?

There will be one Executive Headteacher with a Head of Learning within each school. The Heads of Learning will be enabled to focus their energies on teaching, learning and day to day organisational matters.

The federation, which will be known as **The Village Schools Partnership**, will have one governing board composed of representatives from each school community. The make-up of the governing board has to adhere to the 2012 Constitution Federation Regulations, as amended in 2016.

The membership of this single governing board includes representation for parents and staff, foundation (ACCT) governors, co-opted governors and a local authority governor. Together this group of people will take overall responsibility for all three schools within the federation. The proposed size of the federated governing body would be 14, this would include:

- 2 Parent governors
- 2 Staff governors (including the Executive Headteacher)

- 1 Local Authority appointed governor
- 2 Foundation governors (Atlantic Coast Co-Operative Trust)
- 7 Co-opted governors

The Governing Boards are proposing that the federation start date would be Monday 25th April, the first day of the summer term.

There is a Federation consultation process

The Governors of both governing boards have set up a consultation process to seek the views of parents, staff, the community, the local authority and other key partners. The consultation process will last 6 school weeks, starting from 24th January 2022. Governors would welcome your views and comments and invite you to attend one or more of the following meetings:

- At Buckland Brewer Primary for Flying Start Federation staff on Wednesday 2nd February at 3:30pm
- At Woolser Primary for Woolser Primary staff on Monday 31st January at 3:30pm

The meetings will also have a facility to join via Zoom using the link below (same link for any of the above meetings):

Topic: Village Schools Partnership Statutory Consultation Meetings

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84301231163?pwd=Q3hjNXJrVjd2TXZTSFQ4UjBWSFhxUT09>

Meeting ID: 843 0123 1163

Passcode: 5yqqi4

If you are unable to attend any of the above meetings and would like to discuss federation with your Chair of Governors please contact your school to make an appointment in the usual manner.

Written responses should be addressed to 'The Chair of Governors' of your school and must be received by 3:30pm on **Monday 14th March 2022**. A box for written responses will be provided in each school. You can also share your comments via email to either Governing Board Clerk:

clerk@woolser.ydevon.sch.uk or **cboother@flyingstartfed.org.uk**

It is the Governors who will make the final decision, drawing upon a broad evidence base including the views of parents. Each governing board from each school considering federation takes its own decision. As with any governing board decision this is a simple majority taken at a meeting of the full governing body.

We look forward to hearing from you and will, of course, keep you fully informed regarding our final decision in March.

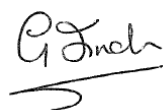
Yours sincerely

Alan Jones



Chair of Governors
Flying Start Federation

Gina Finch



Headteacher
Flying Start Federation

Sarah Broom



Chair of Governors
Woolser Primary School

Matt Cole



Headteacher
Woolser Primary School